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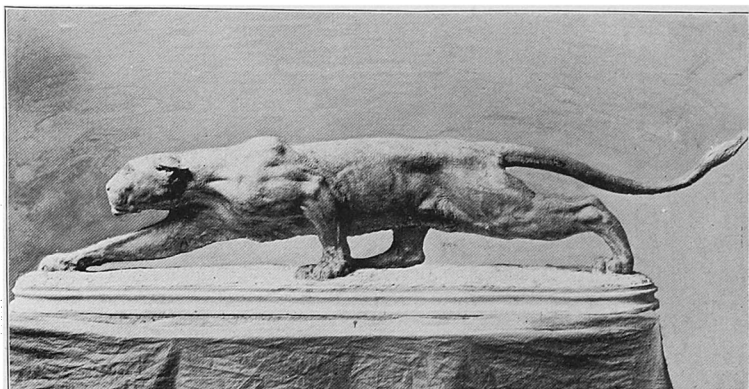
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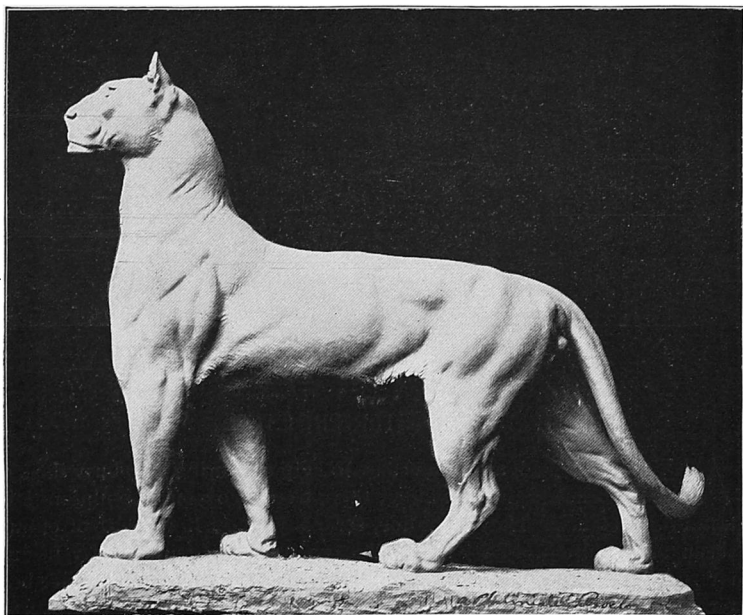
PANTHER, BY A. PHIMISTER PROCTOR.

A. PHIMISTER PROCTOR.

AMONG the gifted men who came to help us during the busy days of the World's Fair's building, there were two young sculptors still unknown to fame. They were fine, serious young fellows, full of enthusiasm and ambition. They liked Chicago, and did their best for us and for the great exposition. Chicago liked them in turn and did her best for them. She gave them renown, and—better even than wealth—granted to each, one of her fairest daughters.

A little later and these erstwhile strangers were again united in good fortune. They received together the first traveling scholarship of the Reinhart fund. This was at first supposed to represent one year's stay abroad, but it turns out to be a sort of "indeterminate sentence," and the one year has lengthened into a second, with prospects of yet two more, of this happy exile. Hermon A. MacNeil and his achievements, I made the subject of a sketch in an Eastern magazine at the time of his departure for Rome. Today I am asked to write of his Parisian colleague, A. Phimister Proctor, well known to all of us as one of the most promising of America's younger sculptors.

Mr. Proctor's father is a Highland Scotchman and his mother a native of New York State. Their distinguished son was born about thirty-five years ago. He had reached the age of five when the family removed to Des Moines, Iowa, where they remained for several years. Like many another, the future artist showed his bent and ability while still a mere child. There in Des Moines, almost without guidance, he began drawing, and made his earliest essays in modeling. From the first he had a



PUMA, FOR PROSPECT PARK, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, BY A. PHIMISTER PROCTOR.

definite idea of becoming an artist. The removal of his family to Denver gave the deciding impetus to his life. Here he had his first opportunity of climbing the mountains and seeking wild animals in their rocky fastnesses. This life had a wonderful attraction for him, and many a day did he spend in hunting and making studies of his booty, living and dead. Practice soon developed him into an unerring marksman whom the old hunters could by no means disdain. He was thirteen years of age when he killed his first deer, but the great day of his youth was when at

sixteen, while hunting entirely alone, he encountered and dispatched successively a large grizzly bear and a formidable bull elk. This was enough to give him a great local renown, as well as to confirm his passion for the chase. With his rifle and his no less inseparable sketch book, he spent all of his vacations in these profitable wanderings. For weeks at a time he would lose himself in the forests and amid the crags of Colorado,



A FAWN, STATUETTE IN BRONZE, BY A. PHIMISTER PROCTOR.

seeing no human being, but driven with a wild enthusiasm, and learning by heart the mountains' rich fauna. No place in the world has to him quite the attraction of those scenes of his youthful prowess. In Chicago, in New York, and even in Paris he is ever sighing for his "happy hunting grounds." A recent letter to a friend contains this passage: "Paris and France are very nice and one learns much in their artistic atmosphere, but I miss the 'Old Rockies' more than anything else, and it will be a

happy day for me when I climb upon the back of a broncho and with my little Mannlicher rifle ride into the mountains."

In 1887 Mr. Proctor had made so good advance in his art that he realized his need of better training. He believed then, as now, that in order to do wild animals, one must study them in their native haunts, but he also appreciated the fact that no great artist was ever entirely "self-made." There is too much to learn — life is too short — and even genius needs guidance. Happily the way was open. There was a convenient ranch to sell, and an interest in a mine. With the proceeds Mr. Proctor went to New York and was speedily enrolled in the classes of the National Academy of Design. Here, and later in the Art Students' League, he worked with an earnestness which won the respect of comrades and teachers alike. It was the huntsman's ardor harnessed down and concentrated. The keen eye and ready hand with which "grizzly" and puma and elk had coped in vain, were equal to the new task. Their past training "told" and the Western boy made rapid progress, while at the same time his quiet geniality and modest air won him many friends.

Mr. Proctor was still unknown to the public when the World's Fair brought him into prominence. His excellent training had been just in time. How well he executed the important decorations intrusted to him we all remember. Few things indeed in the entire exposition were more interesting and impressive than those great motionless creatures, the native American animals as sculptured by Proctor and Kemeys.

After the close of the World's Fair, Mr. Proctor removed to New York, where he did a number of fascinating little bronzes. His time here was, however, largely taken up in work for other sculptors, especially St. Gaudens, whose Logan's splendid steed is in great part the young sculptor's work.

Then came the unexpected but very flattering award of the scholarship and the voyage to Europe. It will be three years this coming New Year's since they went abroad, and these have been fruitful years for both of the young sculptors. The result of so much cheerful, unimpeded effort is great. Our illustrations will give some idea of the splendid workmanship to which Mr. Proctor has attained.

The "Indian Warrior" shows us that Mr. Proctor is fully equal to the difficult problem of the human figure. This admirable group is the most important thing which he has thus far given us. The "Bison," although from a poor photograph, illustrates well the sculptor's careful observation and sense of the general character of the animal, as well as his skillful handling. Very refined indeed is the little fawn — a product of the World's Fair period — and distinctly humorous is the jolly little bear scared to death by the sudden apparition of a tiny, long-eared rabbit.

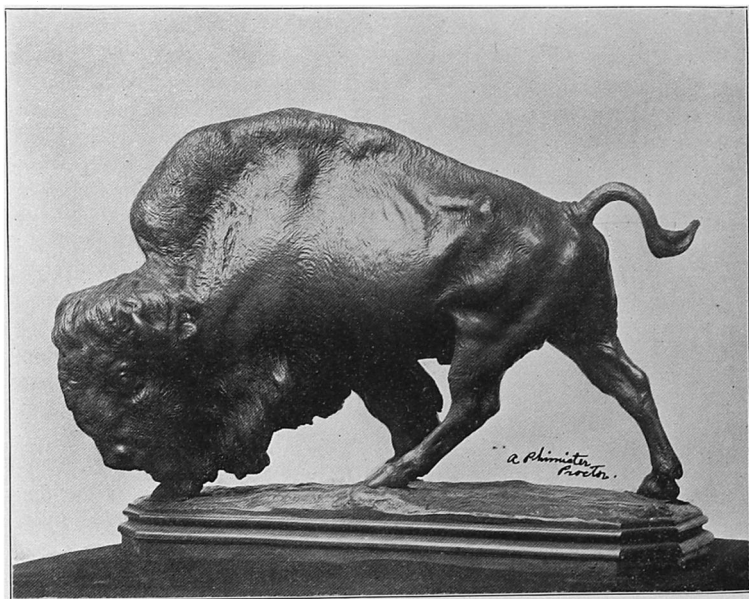


THE INDIAN WARRIOR
SALON OF 1898
BY A. PHIMISTER PROCTOR

These last two are little gems, which would tempt one sorely, at any exhibition, but fortunately they are always chained down.

The striding panther is a powerful work, almost too thin and "anatomical" for comfort — either ours or its own — but betraying everywhere the knowledge and research of its creator. By those who know, this study is counted almost a masterpiece.

A strange, weird figure is that of the colossal puma, destined to be placed at the entrance of Prospect Park, Brooklyn. There are to be two



BUFFALO, BY A. PHIMISTER PROCTOR.

of these gigantic sentinels guarding the gateway. Their effect will be most impressive, for in them the sculptor is doing justice to one of our most beautiful quadrupeds, while the increase in size adds majesty to grace. The originality of the conception, the strangeness of the pose, give one a little shock at first, as do all things which are original, but one is speedily converted to the artist's way of thinking. He learns to see in these mighty felines of the uplifted heads another proof of Mr. Proctor's thorough knowledge of his subject, and feels a real gratitude

for another contribution to American art, as novel and personal as it is powerful.

What is to come next we do not know, but of one thing every one of Mr. Proctor's artist friends is certain—whatever he does will have his best thought and workmanship in it. He never seems to labor to get a thing done, but to make it right. Such men weave immortality into their products.



I have just learned that Mr. Proctor and his artistic wife—whom we used to know as Miss Daisy Gerow—are spending the summer in Marlotte, a tiny village on the border of the forest of Fontainebleau. I stumbled upon that charming spot one summer day, years ago, when wandering through those wonderful woods. Sitting here under a great oak of our newly discovered Barbizon, I like to think of Proctor and his sweet-faced little wife playing with their pretty baby in some sun-flecked nook of that picturesque old

hamlet. It is a quarter-way around the globe, but it may give them pleasure to know that we are watching them, rejoicing in their prosperity, and looking forward to the time when they shall return to us bearing their various trophies of achievement.

LORADO TAFT.

Eagle's Nest, Oregon, Ill.